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THE GIFT OF
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VERDICTS.

by

James Thomas Fields

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VERDICTS.

IMAGINE yourself on Olympus at two,
Zeus yawning from not having something to do,
Tired out and quite sick for a pleasure that 's new.
The very thing strikes him ; he has what he seeks,
And, turning to Hermes, the Thunderer speaks.
I 'll look through his Verdicts ; tell Minos to send 'em ;
I 've doubts how he 's sentenced these Poets—I 'll end 'em ;
His rough honest judgments, much some of 'em need 'em ;
Mnemosyne, dearest, I 'll get you to read 'em.
Their praises have so been buzzed into my ears !
Why, I 've heard nothing else for the past fifty years !
And I 'd know, now at last they 're away from the Earth,
And judged, what the laudings of mortals are worth ;
There 's many a fame that the wearer but owes
To the personal likings of critics he knows,
And many a name that is smothered through pique,
Through not being quite of a sect or a clique ;
To instance the first, look to what a false height
Consumption and Southey threw up a Kirke White ;

See how churchmen prefer what is clumsy or feeble,
And puff into poets Montgomery and Keble ;
(By the first I mean Robert, who's rhymed up the Bible,
Whom Satan has cast for a vilely writ libel,)
How Scotchmen, who hold it's damnation to read
A couplet that's not written north of the Tweed,
Have found, and will stick to their faith until doom,
A Milton in Pollok, because he has gloom ;
So I think that it's, perhaps, worth the reading to see
How the verdicts of Earth and of Hades agree.
The judgments are final ; we're sure on that head ;
The truth can be very well said of the dead.
Ah ! here come the parchments ; O Styx, what a heap !
Well, sweet one, I'll try all I can not to sleep ;
If I do, I must ask you, dear, just for a shake ;
Their bills are the only things keep one awake ;
As to hearing aught else by the lawyers discuss'd,
'Tis taking an opiate and choking with dust.
Who's first ? put them near me ; I'll sort 'em and hand 'em :
But no, never mind ; take them, sweetest, at random ;
You'll not make the worst best by reading him first,
And the best, read the latest, will not be the worst ;
But, Gods ! how I talk ! as if I were a Pepys ;
Read, rosy cheek, read, and we'll see what the heap is.

Ah, first comes a shade that's as little a bore,
As a very great poet, ANACREON MOORE.

Yes, monarchs have flatter'd, and courts have attracted him,
Stars and garters, and dukes and princesses, have acted him ;
And what caught their fancies ?—pray, what are your guesses ?
Why, mark me, he wrote most of stars and princesses.
He never disgusts a taste aristocratic,
With interest won for a pair in an attic ;
His heroes drink wine out of real golden chalices,
Have each fifty peacocks, and five hundred palaces,
And as to the jewels he gives 'em, believe 'em !
Why, rubies and brilliants ! we cannot conceive 'em !
We 're bewilder'd with splendours, in numbers so puzzling,
With houris in nothing, and maidens in muslin,
Till, spite of Golcondas and vales of Cashmere,
We long for a something more sober and near,
Such passions as hurry the beat of your heart on
In an Admiral's Daughter—Jane Eyre,—Mary Barton ;
With sorrows that never drew tears, we would part
For a grief that, though low, should come home to the heart.
His stories are pretty and shiny, we own—
For heaping out fancies leave Little alone—
And his verses have quite a Rossini-ish tone ;
But still as, I think, Jeffrey said once before,
If more were still better, we still should want more,
And he 's quite a Bright who can read with mood placid
The tale of the prophet who ends in the acid ;
For a sane man—it 's sure in the end quite to craze him,
To keep long the weak company of Hafed and Azim.

Your Irishman always will be in a bustle,
A Donnybrook fair of a crowding and hustle ;
And against all these sweet things I frame this indictment,
They 're guilty of wearing us out with excitement ;
Not a page of his poetry anything knows
Of the value at times of relief and repose ;
(Homer 's not always lightning, as Longinus shows)
And what is still worse, not in one but we feel
That all is theatric, and nothing is real ;
That amid all his lovings, and weepings, and strife,
There may be galvanic, there 's not living life ;
And when he is finest and deepest—we pause,
And think of a ballet, and gaslights, and gauze.
It 's quite a relief to get flesh and blood girls,
Real live human nature without any pearls ;
We feel that he drops the wrong bait when he angles
For smiles and for tears, but with tinsel and spangles,
And decline to afford him a single small bite
At things that we 'd rather have out of our sight ;—
The fact is, he 's wrong when he queerly supposes
That any would like to smell always to roses ;
A nightingale sings like a Lind, we admit,
But should it sing always ? oh dear, not a bit !
We should tire in time of its gurgling song,
And be glad, in exchange, of a discord ere long ;
Why, doom'd to hear always a Lind, we should shriek
At last, as a change, for a grindstone to squeak.

Now MOORE never dreams that, to wake up a soul,
A half-flood of raptures is more than a whole ;
That butterflies, pretty in twos and in threes,
In clouds, thick as locusts, are sure not to please ;
(Your sunshiny waves shouldn't come in whole seas)
In fact, we would rather, if have one we must,
Have the plague that in Egypt came down with the dust,
Than bear an eternal infliction of blisses,
An awful existence of nothing but kisses ;
How gladly we offer to Heaven our benison,
Escaped to the Marys of Wordsworth and Tennyson,
And feel, for one minute with Motherwell's Jeanie,
Of houris his Eblis may take all or any ;
If his houris we 'd rather be rid of—Zeus ! who 'll
For a moment put up with a Gheber or Ghoul !
What they are, all must own that their notions aren't clear,
But the bishops, be sure, would look after them here,
That they 're nasty and black he himself makes appear ;
And why we should go such a very long way
To meet such strange monsters, I can't at all say,
And that MOORE himself can't too, a drachma I 'll lay.
The worst of it is, that where poetry 's round him,
All ready at hand, he can't see that it 's found him ;
Nature must be rouged for him ; he strangely prefers
The reds of cosmetics to any of hers ;
He never can learn that the rose of each dimple
Her natural roses, are not far too simple ;

So he whites up her white, and he reddens her red,
Till he makes her too much like—what shall not be said,
And making her simpler and ogle, you've got
At last, when he's finish'd, just all she is not.
Well, thank him for one thing; we haven't a fear from
His blunders, but all must see rocks they must steer from,
And reading him through, why, a something we've won
If we only have learn'd what all poets should shun,
If we only have learn'd what is known to so few,
With Wordsworth to stick to the real and the true,
And leave Eastern Peris and heathenish elves
To poets, unlike us, who've seen them themselves.

Now as to his songs—true, they're sparkling and flowing,
But not with the passion of true feeling glowing,
They're fit perhaps to bloom in a drawing-room's heat,
But far too unreal for the cottage and street;
Sentimental, they're suited for misses from ten
Till they're out of their school-days, but not to stir men.
Why, they're icicles seen by the lava of Burns,
That sweeps you to tears and to laughter by turns;
To red heat but moonshine, and that shining palely,
The degree called comparative over Haynes Bayley.
Forget not his wit, though, whose flash has been brightening
Our time with the dazzle and dart of the lightning;
Though do not mistake me, his is not the stroke
To level a throne or to shatter an oak,
(A joke from a Béranger isn't a joke),

Nor is his the rough bludgeon-work of a Churchill,
Nor Wolcot's coarse strength, though he wields not the birch ill ;
And nobody needs to be told that, of course,
The blows that he deals want a Dryden's fierce force ;
That for passion too often you 'll long in his lines,
Where each point with a steely cold brilliancy shines ;
Yet if they're not dragons in wrath on the wing,
They're dragon-flies still in their beauty and sting ;
A mosquito won't slay you, and yet you can't scorn it,
And his satire can torture and plague like a hornet ;
So plague you, that if you're not thick as a dunce
In the hide, you'd far rather be slaughter'd at once ;
But no, he's too merciful still in the main,
He'll not have you murdered, but only insane ;
So barb after barb in your carcase he sticks,
Till, like Gulliver's self, you are raving with pricks ;
Lilliputian his arrows may be, but too small
Though they may be to slaughter, they're mighty to gall.
He makes up in number so well for their size,
That at last a death-thrust as a blessing you'd prize ;
But that he can't give you, nor is it his game,
He's curious to show you how well he can aim ;
So he shoots and he shoots, for his pleasure, not yours,
And never, like Goldsmith, at once wounds and cures ;
'Tis a wasp, not a bee, in his thrust that you meet,
You may get enough sharpness, but nothing that's sweet ;
I'm pretty well sure you won't think that it's blunt,
When once you have read his descent upon Hunt ;

His is not poor Goldy's sweet banter that gladdens you,
Even when it is keenest ; his only but maddens you ;
You feel 'tis not your laughs his arrows would win,
But only his own as he whizzes them in ;
And yet there's a twinkle so wickedly sly,
As he peppers away, in his ecstasied eye,
That at last you're inclined more to laugh than to cry,
And feel, you don't know why, good nature and malice are
In him nearer neighbours than Dover and Calais are ;
But one thing you must see, you can but regret,
You cannot forgive it, and cannot forget,
His genius at work on such small matters set,
That, like Disraeli's fireworks, his brilliancy claims
But to whiz and to sparkle, no very high aims,
Rejoiced if he, cat-like, can play with his mouse,
For the gladness and profit of pleased Holland House ;
Yet own, though his arm has not even Pope's sweep,
That his cut's smooth and sharp, though it may not be deep,
That though to small objects his Whiggishness limit her,
His muse, when she's carving, can shear like a scimeter,
That ne'er, like the keenest of Smiths, he's been seen,
Abusing the Ballot, or screening a Dean,
And, though but small thanks to him for it belong,
If he is but half right, he is never quite wrong.

For the man, he is witty and genial, and such
As in public or private all can but like much ;

He is one that in company always delights 'em,
Where he sings his own songs quite as well as he writes 'em ;
All his virtues too long it would take to tell o'er,
So I give you, with Byron, "a health to TOM MOORE."

A trumpet-blast, heart-stirring, piercing, and clear,
Such as rang out a welcome to Tyrtæus here !
See the shade of the truest of poets appear !
'Mongst the peaks of Parnassus how long shall you ramble,
Ere you 'light on a poet that's greater than CAMPBELL ?
Ere you find one, the whole of whose failings we stuff
In this one truest sentence—he wrote not enough ?
His failure he had, that I do not deny,
With his "Pilgrim of Glencoe" repelling the eye ;
'Twas the child of his age, and who needs to be told,
They are much over-loved who are born when we're old ?
All know it died early and left none to mourn it ;
Requiescat in pace ! don't weep it or scorn it,
But hear it, from out its grave, preach that he quarrels
With sense, who, when old, will not rest on his laurels,
But who o'er his one aged failure would gloat,
Who a "Lochiel's" grand "Warning"—"O'Connor's Child" wrote,
Who pealed out the tempest's wild burst on the shore,
The howl of the storm, and the ocean's deep roar,
In "Ye Mariners," and that great war-ode that told
How the sea-might of England in thunders was rolled,
When Nelson's fierce wrath wrapped the Danes in its fold !

These are battle-songs such as of old Homer wrote,
Fit to sound out the war-deeds of Britain afloat,
Which a Collingwood 'mid a Trafalgar might quote ;
Such as, sung in calm homes or a full English street,
Where men but for trade and for trafficking meet,
To the white glow of passion all bosoms would heat ;
Such as, if foes should dare yet again on the seas
To show frowning broadsides, would sweep us from ease
And send us rejoicing, with old English smiles,
To win, 'neath new Nelsons, new fame at fresh Niles.
O well, well the greatest of England might hold
The dark pall that covered him last, calm and cold !
And well warring statesmen might meet, with eyes dim,
O'er his coffin to pay their high homage to him !
And well might his thankful land give him to rest
In her holiest earth, with her wisest and best !
On the graves of few greater the deep shadow falls
Of Westminster's roof, or the gloom of St. Paul's,
And still men for ever shall throng to that spot,
Where he sleeps whose true fame shall be never forgot.

There's one little matter I must still be heard on,
Although 'tis a thing I'd fain not say a word on.
One's pained to see CAMPBELL, with half-ashamed looks,
Take to lending his great name to other men's books ;
And what, with our love for him, drives us half mad,
They paid him to put it on books that were bad.

Of "Frederick's Life," that he couldn't get credit or
Aught else but abuse from, why stoop to be editor ?
If Boswell's reprinted, of course you don't wonder
To find there's a Croker to edit and blunder,
With false explanations and plague-dust of notes,
Where Macaulay so shows he misleads and misquotes.
That editing's truly the vilest vile hoax
When a nobody's nothings with greatness it cloaks ;
A crow's but a crow, even though it be drest
From an eagle's fierce plumes in the noblest and best ;
You'll make it no nightingale, though not a wing
But shall show you the hues in which nightingales sing ;
But ask for its song, so bedizen'd, of course,
You get no jug-jugs, only caws harsh and hoarse ;
Who'd know such vile counterfeits, let him detect
In a book some one edits, a book to neglect ;
Of course I mean novels, and such books as CAMPBELL, for
Pay, with his name made the public to scramble for ;
But enough of this tricking, 'twas not to his credit,
That CAMPBELL, for pay, took to prose and to edit.
Well, poets are mortals ; in erring we're all one,
And so say of failings, that his was a small one ;
But I hold a great poet's a model to time,
And a fault in another in him is a crime.
No ; plead not that genius should shield its abuse,
As genius sees clearest, it lacks all excuse ;

All pitfalls the best eyes can easily mind,
For falling true justice but pardons the blind.
So blame even CAMPBELL ; but after all 's done,
It is but a single small spot in his sun,
And, thinking no more of it, hold his high name
One worthiest of filling the trumpet of fame.

For the rest, he was all that your liking would gain,
Though 'tis whispered, when old, he was rather too vain,
Thought the poems he wrote were excelled but by few,
Which, though he himself thought it, was ne'ertheless true,
But which every one 's held to have no right to do.
He wrote but poor letters—was true and sincere,
And the best of good haters that man e'er came near ;
Yet in love, as in hate, he was equally strong,
In his love of the right—in his hate of the wrong,
In his warmth for those tyranny doom'd to have no land
But the strangers' to dwell in—the homeless of Poland ;
For these, with a heat that speaks high for his heart,
He wrote and implored, and in all took his part,
From the hour when in youth he was found by their side,
In his first song of Hope, till they wept when he died.
O well might that dust, Kosciusko, be thrown
In his grave, that in reverence was brought from thy own !
The grave it was borne from—that where it found rest,
Alike with the blessing of Poland was blest ;

For ever, by each when her outcasts shall stand,
 They shall name both alike in true love for their land ;
 For ever shall bid by their children be read
 How for Poland this sung—how for Poland that bled ;
 So, kinsmen in glory, shall grow the great dead,
 Companion'd for ever in brotherhood sublime,
 In the reverence and awe of the free of all time.

To turn from this eagle—O goodness ; what 's that !
 One can't think of wasting one's time on a gnat ;
 CANNING ? if he 's a claim to be here, let him show it ;
 A pretty good statesman 's not therefore a poet.
 You can't call those very small things that he writ,
 In these days of Jerrold and Thackeray—wit ;
 They may be fine paste—they 're not diamonds a bit ;
 Despite of their spite and the men he attacks,
 We shouldn't think much of them now from mere hacks ;
 And as with a halo of fame to surround him,
 As if in possession of thunder we 'd found him,
 Why that for a joke 's even too much by half,
 And makes us inclined more to scoff than to laugh.
 Think of this little tittlebat trying to swim
 With the whales that were teased, did they know it ? by him ;
 His strength in a teacup, he perhaps might to show it try,
 But where would he sink in the ocean of poetry !
 Three-fourths of his life as a statesman, you 'll mind,
 This wit as he afterwards own'd was stone blind,

And only began in the last fourth to see
All his notions and common sense didn't agree ;
That all that on which he had spit out his spite
In un-toried Coleridge and Southey, was right,
And that all that he 'd slander'd and rail'd for so long,
Was beyond his denying it, shockingly wrong ;
That, if he 'd not be an insane politician,
He really must take up almost their position.
But I'll give him the credit you 'd little have guess'd,
He truly believed both the faiths he profess'd,
The one that he grew in and that that, like Peel,
The force of conviction compell'd him to steal.
Enchanted by party, that mischievous elf,
He tried very hard to turn into himself ;
And strangest of suicides, died for his clings to
The very right things that he 'd tried to give stings to.

For a Canning's whole full length who can care a—flam !
Give me him that I love so—that ace of hearts, LAMB ;
Oh rarest of natures ! whose full worth none knew,
Till the dear hand of Talfourd the curtain withdrew,
And showed us the gentlest the strongest was too.
Give me him, and if Minos the music has jarr'd,
With the thought of a discord—one line that is hard,
If he 's put in the portrait, not all the Earth's pelf,
Shall bribe me from drawing him truly, myself.

Go on and read softly, and if your sight's dim,
With a tear of affection and true love for him,
Don't check it ; to weep out your reverence pause,
And I'll love you the better from knowing the cause.

CHARLES LAMB, better known by his alias, Elia,
A shade, sad and gentle as that of Ophelia,
Whose spirit's soft sunshine so gladsomely play'd,
O'er the gloom of his sorrows, you saw not the shade.
In all that he wrote, grief and joy took a part ;
Men seeing but nature, mistook it for art.
'Tis an April sweetness his writings endears,
A rainbow-like charm, sprung of gladness and tears,
Where the darkest of shadows are tender with light,
And the gloom does but render the brightness more bright.
A Yorick, to set the whole room in a roar—
A Sterne, to draw tears where he drew laughs before—
A Howard, in pity for guilt and for pain—
The gentlest of natures more gentle, again ;
As free as the creature that named him from blame,
In short, a new Goldsmith in all but the name.

Well, well, he has softened old Minos ; though rough,
The sketch is not bad ; but who'd praise him enough !
Oh where save in Dickens on earth shall we find
A genius so tender—a satire so kind—
A humour so racy—a wit so refined !

And who dares come next to this soul of fine whim ?
What, LEIGH HUNT ! well, Lamb's old friend may well follow him !
He 's not so unlike him—though, mind, to pronounce,
Our Hampstead Essayist a Lamb, were a bounce ;
To style him in that way would but make you laugh,
Yet you 'll own, if a glass of HUNT's finest you quaff,
If he 's not prime old Elia, he 's Lamb-half-and-half.
But no blindness can I to his smallnesses show ;
If you ask, has he any ? how can I say—no !
In his poems and life, the plain truth out to speak,
You cannot help feeling his character 's weak ;
That, if anything will lay his fame on the shelf,
'Tis his talking and prosing so much of himself.
His book about Byron, Tom Moore much derides,
But here to truth, Moore 's not the safest of guides,
And I daresay myself there were faults on both sides.
On one thing however there can be no strife,
Hunt shouldn't have written so weakly his life.
If he 'd thought less of money and more of his name,
Such a work might have formed the best part of his fame,
A pet autobiography—just such a book into
Which one loves more than much better to look into.
He has fancy and fine thought and kindness and worth,
And a sort of mild humour that stirs a half mirth,
But he 's always so full of his love for the Earth !
Not for nature, I mean, though he half bores upon it,
But his meek gentle love for each scamp that is on it,

Quite fondling Tories, and now George the Fourth,
And brothering Crokers and Christopher North,
Who on him the fiercest of north winds growled forth ;
Praising each little princess and finding a lamb in her,
Just as he never would have done in the Examiner ;
Laureate-odeing the Queen herself, but, never mind,
Thank God ! much to praise in her truly he 'll find !
And who 'd to her virtues have him alone blind !
Still you 'll own we have good enough cause for surprise,
For lifting of hands and for raising of eyes,
When we see the old Radical, he who dared raise
The voice of a freeman against Castlereaghs,
Now book-making what is so very like praise
Of the worst set he bearded in Carlton House days.
Nay, blame not his vanity ; they so abused him,
That some over-self-valuation 's excused him ;
The fools of the world so bespatter the poet,
And doubt so his rank, that he 's driven to show it.
They place him so low from their false elevation,
That he 's driven too much to assert his true station,
And in showing what ought to be clear to all eyes,
Is far, far too often more noisy than wise.
This very thing Forster most finely has shown
In the best life of Goldsmith that e'er will be known,
For writing which Prior won't let him alone.
HUNT has feeling, though too much 'tis that of the city,
And beauty, though too much it treads on the pretty ;

Too often by half, you feel half bound to hiss it, he
Disgusts you so much with his would-be simplicity.
Looking through him and Chaucer, good lord ! how you start,
To see the wide difference 'twixt nature and art,
Or setting him down by one of his own stature,
But one who, though small, has the art that is nature,
One who brims to your eyes all the sweet tears that tell
How next but to Burns is the Scotch Motherwell,
Or that other fine Scot, whom if one reads, to stop he
Will find himself forced by tears at " Casa Wappy,"
There you feel there 's the difference, if your taste is mine,
Between good ginger-beer and the finest of wine.
I don't here dispraise him ; I don't mean to say
That each is not good in its separate way,
(And I 'd have you observe that I beg here to state
That all his translations are really first-rate)
Drink both and like both, if it 's still understood,
That not in like goodness they 're equally good ;
Between them still feel that there differences are
Wide as those 'twixt a fine Paris diamond and star,
That his nature comes badly off, bearing the brunt
Of strife with real nature ; 'tis nature and HUNT ;
And that he 'd been still better, and you had been sure
To admire him still more, if he 'd served her up, pure.
He 's a fine sense of taste, though a fault I must speak,
His liking too much that is little and weak,

Though I do not know books that are pleasanter much
 Than his Elegant Extracts, where finely he 'll touch
 On real beauties and things that he thinks to be such.
 Of his works I like these, with his prose, best of any ;
 Give him thanks ; of such books he has given us many.
 Ah ! well do I mind, as from boyhood I rose,
 How I loved and I read and I raved of his prose,
 And, like nine out of ten, say nay to it who will,
 I love it and read it more than his verse still.
 Still I like them, but then what to me were more dear
 Than his half-commonplace "Indicator" and "Seer."
 Whether 'tis for their goodness—auld lang syne—or how
 I won't say, but I like to look over them now,
 And, feeling them weaker, yet, why I can't tell,
 Now far, far from a boy, like them nearly as well.
 So hoping he 'll pardon my being so blunt,
 For the good that he 's done, and 'tis much, let 's thank HUNT.

This greatest of shadows—why, whom have we got ?
 Make way ! show him honour !—the one WALTER SCOTT.
 By Zeus ! you should bless him ; more pleasure he 's given
 To mortals than any but Shakspeare and Heaven.
 Oh, was not his life now the wildest of dreams,
 Than his own glorious fictions more filled with extremes !
 Unknown until forty—not having a thought
 How he would be talked of—how he would be bought,

Then printing translations that nobody thought much of,
Jet black German horrors that nobody bought much of,
Then, with one eagle pounce on the love of his time,
Binding up the whole very dark ages in rhyme,
Discovering much better than heroes Arabic,
Stark moss troopers sold in verse octosyllabic,
That Scotchmen and glamour far more would alarm a
Plain English fancy than frights from Kehama,
That round him, on lowland moor and highland heather,
Lay cantos that needed but putting together ;
Then, when men of these were beginning to tire,
He took a fresh circle and shot away higher,
In prose piercing up to so wondrous a height,
That he half thought himself he was lost to men's sight ;
But through prose as through verse the same genius would break,
Who was lightening out novels men couldn't mistake ;
So, honour'd and read by a whole earth, he grew
A mystery mysterious to none but a few,
The Greatest Unknown the whole universe knew ;
Still what cared the world that he wore a glass mask,
While that wonderful brain gave them all they could ask,
While that wonderful hand wrought its wonderful task,
While tales from that strength, quick as pebbles, were hurl'd,
To be fought for, devoured, and paid for by a world !
Say "The Waverley Novels ;"—now think what that means ;
Amy Robsart—Di Vernon, and more, Jeanie Deans ;

Sweet Effie, that sister so young and so fair,
And the woe of that old father with his grey hair,—
And she of that tragedy, finer than all,
Lucy Ashton, and crowds we 've not time to recall,
Fierce Richard—stout Robin—Rob Roy—Saladin—
Prince—peasant—crusader—the generous—the mean—
The loving—the hateful—fanatic cadaverous—
The raving Macbriar—the butchering Claverhouse—
(Whom Aytoun, to Aytoun's conviction, has proved,
For deeds that we loathe him for ought to be loved)
Edie Ochiltree—Dalgetty—Meg and dark Norna—
Of fools, James the first ; well you know he has torn a
Great leaf out of Nature's book, that one that's stating
Hers and Shakspeare's receipts which they use when creating.
Well, these made him world-famous, but not alone
Made him famous, but also made riches his own ;
In fact, when you see the amount he was paid,
You feel as much no hand but his ever made ;
In truth he made writing too much of a trade
And hurried out on to the public at last,
For what they would bring him, romances too fast,
But half-real-Scott tales that his fame overcast ;
Of course I 'm not going, goose-like, to desire
The craftsman in brainwork should not have his hire ;
I know he must live, and if he sells delight,
To sell it for all that he can is quite right ;

If he has any doubt Peel will set it to rest
With half of the motto beneath Cobden's crest,
"To sell in the dearest of markets is best."
This known, let him get just as much as he can,
So he get it by pleasing and bettering man,
Yet, while saying this, mind, I cannot deride
Or say that poor Burns's was no noble pride,
Who spurned off a Thomson's pay as it were shame,
Too happy to write for his country and fame
This, perhaps, most Quixotic and foolish may seem,
But still there's a higher truth than most men dream
In Cervantes' romance, and more blest had been Scott
Prizing more what he did and far less what he got.
The world little thinks that these novels were made for them,
Not that they might be pleased, but that he might be paid for them,
That a "Pirate" was bartered for thousands, before
An "Abbot" was finished, that brought thousands more ;
(I haven't my Lockhart at hand, so if you
Find the names here are wrong, still the facts here are true,)
Well, where did it lead to—this very Scotch vice ?
To a venturing on—then to a fall through the ice—
To the wealth that five fine German kingdoms would buy—
To an ugly great house, an offence to the eye,
Half castle, half mansion—part fine, part monastic—
All plaything, all counterfeit—wholly fantastic—
To the planting of forests, the hankering for land,
The desire growing wild, which I can't understand,

With an ultimate aim to be lord-like and grand ;
And then comes, to startle us next, most of all,
The terrible ending, the sorrowful fall—
The crash that that fairy-like wealth swept away,
That, tempting to ruin, then turned into clay,
Then the noble, thrice noble endeavour to pay,
The gigantic attempt to be honest and just,
Which, if you do not reverence, all other men must ;
Gleam and gloom, how they cross in our Great Wizard's story,
April-like in its tears, April-like in its glory !

Now weigh well his novels, and freely confess
The more that you read them, you prize them the less.
Less !—I mean to unsay not a word said before,
In one way they 're less, in another they 're more ;
You 'll marvel and marvel, even more than you did,
At charms scarcely thought of, and beauties half hid,
Grieve and laugh through each tale, be entranced with the story,
And, closing the volumes, hold SCOTT worth his glory ;
But then should you ask yourself what deep new thought
From the stores of this great necromancer you 've brought,
Lines by which a world 's not only tickled but taught,
Such as come in whole thousands in Shakespeare unsought,
Lines that in the stern war of existence's strife,
Can strengthen, and straighten, and better a life,
Alas ! with a sigh, after thinking, you own
He did not instruct you—he pleased you alone ;

That spite of his heart and his genius—in spite
Of all that the man and the author was—right
Is the verdict that holds that he does but delight,
And that therefore he stands much less high than he might ;
A Samson with heaven-sent strength from his birth,
Content to grind mills and content to make mirth,
And not to give that which gives genius its worth,
And makes it the guide, not the mime of the earth ;
Not like Bulwer and Thackeray, and Dickens and Jerrold,
One a new and a holier existence to herald,
But like him at a fair by whom wonders are shown,
Contented to be but the showman alone.

Now turn to the man ; look at him with his fame,
With the thirst not to leave a mere earth-famous name,
That he valued quite coolly, with almost some shame ;
As it grew heaven-high, his ambition grew shorter,
Dwarfed down to leave acres and much bricks and mortar ;
'Twas a mammoth desirous of being a mouse,
Phœbus hot on bequeathing a Scotch name and house ;
Now here you will see was the poorest conclusion
Of such a sun-flight ; what a fearful illusion !
And of clashing ideas what a shocking confusion !
Think of crests, and heraldic supporters and arms,
For a man, the one thought of the world, having charms ;
That he who earth with a new pleasure supplies,
Can the very small fame of a baronet prize ;

Can think of his sons' sons not honouring him
For his world-honoured genius that ne'er shall grow dim,
But for using its proceeds to humour a whim !
That he, the keen head and the untiring brain,
Should think of his great greatness with half disdain,
And of titles and trumpery stoop to be vain !
O, poor human nature ! how sad 'tis to find
Such a mind to true grandeur so shockingly blind !

Here, too, was a Tory who railed at men's rights,
And thought a bad king was the grandest of sights,
But stooped not to Southey's or Wilson's mean spite,
Yet who, most read of writers on earth, set his heart on
Adoring the great George the Fourth in a tartan,
And, growing as bitter as his great heart could,
Proved man's right way on, but the blind understood.
Well, well ; e'en the greatest to what strange hours folly ticks !
In love for the man let's forgive him his politics.

O'er your merits, O ROGERS, 'tis clear that 'twere wrong,
Though you've taste and you've fancy, to hover for long.
Pass on ; I dismiss you and PROCTER in song
Together ; both pretty, but far—far from strong.

Ah ! here comes our CROKER, who best of all he males
Can butcher and mangle and scarify females ;

It doesn't suit all men, you well may opine,
But all have their talent, and that is his line ;
Let him catch one alone, talking sense or peacemongery,
And see if he won't be a Haynau in Hungary !
It isn't to many the pleasantest sight
To see him indulge in this dearest delight,
But if you would know what this boatswain can do,
In "Quarterly" slashings he's matched but by few,
Go, view him at work in John Murray's "Review."
If he can't find a woman, his talent will show it
The best in abusing some very great poet ;
If one dare be a Tennyson, well may he rue it !
And if a Macaulay, why, let him look to it,
C. mangles a Keats just as Gifford would do it.
He doesn't get on well at praising at all,
Unless it's with something that's Tory and small,
(A Manners who rhymes that humanity's made
For lordlings to kick, not for art and for trade),
Then see how the pigmy to Godhood he'll raise,
And trowel him large with whole cartloads of praise,
Till it's really not easy, believe me, to find
The poor God such coatings of rubbish behind,
And besides, most that see his divinity hid,
When asked to disclose him, say "No ; God forbid !"
And, glad that he's tombed, leave his Godship alone
In CROKER's huge pyramid, hid and unknown.

As a rhymers he's one he the least would rebuke,
Printing very small Odes to Field Marshal the Duke,
And clinging unseen, as your fabled gnats do,
To the chariot that bears him that won Waterloo.

Stand forth, shrinking shade, and our blessings endure,
Thou worthiest of honour, thou friend of the poor,
Hoop, to whom fame above fame I joy to assure ;
Thou standing, in thy kind of genius, alone,
Thou by whom equal humour and pathos were shown,
Thou heart, with a tenderness all woman's own,
Thou finest of spirits thy thronged age has known !
How shall we think of thee ? to weep or to laugh,
Thou, half, deepest sadness—broad merriment, half ?
Yet whate'er thou wert half of, who dared not to see
Thou wert all that a man and a Christian should be,
A model for genius to set up on high,
Teaching how it should live—teaching how it should die.
Thou prayer to cold worldliness—thou who could'st win
Its dull ear to hear that hard apathy's sin
Towards the miseries, lurking our cities within,
Which poem of thine do we love most to prize ?
The wail of the Shirt or thy wan " Bridge of Sighs,"
Or that wonderful painting, where still awful gloom
Ever thickens the air in each sin-darkened room,
Thy " Haunted House " dreeding its weird murderous doom,

Or thy Kilmansegg story, wherein we behold,
While we laugh at the grim humour with which 'tis told,
An awful revealment how souls may be sold
Unto death, that will bow not to God, but to gold ?
Then if you want satire, from these turning, turn
To that "Ode" where he sets a Rae Wilson to learn
That the way to get sinners to heaven's not to shove them
And poke them up skyward, with scoffs from above them,
Than to scorn and to damn 'twere far better to love them ;
A wisdom most Christian ; a teaching I prize,
Though it be not perhaps so plain to bigotry's eyes,
Nor to cant's won't-see sense, which all reason defies.
Thou wert not a mere marshaller of couplets and rhymes,
Like so many of those who have brightened our times ;
No—thy pages were cries from the crushed and down-trod,
And therefore wert thou a true prophet from God,
And therefore we hail thee, all pure and all good,
One for love and high reverence, thou fine-hearted Hood.

Young shade whose white brows greenest laurels entwine,
In whose deep eyes the fires of fine genius shine,
Welcome, KEATS, thou, Olympus's favourite and mine !
Ah, well may men bless thee ! again they behold
Homer's Gods, throned for awe in their mansions of gold ;
Again, lightning-wielder, thy dread thunder-nods
Mortals watch in white fear for, with awe-stricken Gods ;

All of beauty and fear that the great ancient told
Rise in great breathing forms, half as fair as of old ;
Once more Aphrodite gleams up from the foam
And lustrous in whiteness, seeks heaven, her home ;
Again to the pale shades the winged Hermes speeds ;
Again Pan hears Syrinx lament 'mid her reeds ;
We watch, 'mid dim woods, not for Dryads in vain,
And Oreads fleet by in the sunbeams again ;
Naiads haunt stream and river, and Syrens the main,
Lulling ocean's soothed waves with their old luring strain ;
Would you have the great white brows of Heré appear ?
Would you gaze on fierce Pallas at rest on her spear,
Or through swart Hades' realms roam in scarce-breathing fear ?
To your aid the strong power of his high genius call ;
For ever before you they breathe, one and all.
Bless him and be blest ; a new world you have won,
As fair as the real world that lies 'neath the sun ;
Here shall you find peace from existence's strife,
Here a refuge, afar from the worst ills of life.
Had he lived, who had boasted of loftier fame ?
Had not Earth searched in vain for a much greater name
Than his that " the Quarterly " held up to shame ?
And this was a genius for bigots to shriek at !
For Giffords and such things to gibber and squeak at !
For a Jeffrey to see, after some year or two,
Had merit sufficient to suit his Review,

To be patted and petted with pretty half praise,
That was more meant the critic than poet to raise !
O glory unto the two mighty Reviews
That fame, to those having it, never refuse,
That one or the other have tried to write down
Every name they now lackey with praise and renown,
Once their scorn, now their idol to praise to the town !
Well, thank God ! truth wins, spite of all they can pen,
And genius, in spite of them, is seen of men ;
They struggle to stifle its lustre in vain,
And only succeed with their blundering disdain,
In giving such natures as KEATS's some pain,
And perhaps, when great genius hangs on a breath,
In impoverishing the world with its weak body's death,
But never, believe me ! the death of its mind,
Whose fine inspiration 's left breathing behind,
In due time, its due meed of reverence to find.
Blest is he who their scorn with unmoved contempt meets,
And their sneers with unruffled indifference treats !
Blest are they who are stronger in frame than was KEATS !
Well, well, he has gone where Reviews sting no more,
And left us his volumes to love and gloat o'er,
One whose poems we treasure—whose fame we adore.

Have we no great poem, as Wilson has said ?
Who can say it, that has once " Hyperion " read,

With its Titan-like strength, and its grand primal gloom,
Crushing down the awed soul with the fallen Gods' doom,
Till you shudder and think that 'tis Milton is here,
And half you see drear Pandemonium appear,
With its forms, like to Gods, that you love with strange fear.
Like to those glorious Greek shapes, that so ever tax man
For wonder and worship, the outlines of Flaxman.
Then his "Lamia" read over—his sweet "Agnes' Eve,"
His "Pot of" sad "Basil," and if you can leave
Even these (though they want the full strength that he grew to
In his great epic fragment) without feeling few to
Such fullness of beauty can truly lay claim,
I hold you a critic in nought but the name,
And hold him, in spite of you, high up to fame.
Then, if what rarer beauty he yet has, you'd learn,
To his odes, that I turn to so often, O turn,
To that sung "to Autumn" and "to a Greek urn ;"
And if you would hear yet one strain higher still,
Let the hushed air the gush of his "Nightingale" fill,
And in you all thoughts but of high rapture kill ;
If saddened by losses, or sorrow, or pain,
Pour the joy of its gladness full flood through your brain,
Then sober to sadness, and quaff it again.
High honour to those who the God on earth knew,
Cowden Clarke, Leigh Hunt, Severn—the fine faithful few,
Who, in life and in death, to his greatness were true ;

And honour to Milnes who has ventured to tell
The tale of his struggles and sorrows so well ;
And high honour to Shelley, the greatest among
His fellows, who, when in the grave the sweet tongue
Of our poet was stilled, his sweet Elegy sung,
In a strain of sad music—of linked word on word,
Such as was from young Milton for Lycidas heard ;
Hark ! and while your full heart to its sad sweetness beats,
Drop a blessing and tear to the memory of KEATS.

So now for another—what, SOUTHEY ? this shade is
A sight that may well be an honour to Hades ;
A model for father, for husband, for friend ;
Who would tell all his virtues, would ne'er make an end,
Persevering, most manly, frank, loving, sincere,
As near to perfection as man can be near.
Of his learning, the least that can truly be said
Is—he'd read every writer that's living or dead ;
Who for all these, and more, through the world wouldn't chase books,
Will find all in bits in his four common-place books ;
In fact, looking through all he wrote, you're discerning
That he's much over-rich in strange wealth he's been earning,
And staggering beneath ten great mind-loads of learning,
Nay, sometimes so weighed down, you can but much fear
To find him a David with Saul's mighty spear,
And your dread you find realised often—that's clear.

It needs a Macaulay or Arnold to know,
 Of their huge treasure-heaps, what they ought'nt to show :
 It won't do to pitchfork as fast as you can,
 Right and wrong, right and left, upon poor smother'd man ;
 Reading SOUTHEY, you feel the gates wide—the floods loose ;
 He tires you for ever with learning's abuse,
 Not confining its presence to where it's of use ;
 A Carlyle and Scott should have managed to show him
 How to make it the life, not the death of a poem ;
 (At my christening Carlyle, a poet, don't stare !
 Read his " French Revolution," and truly declare
 Few epics are like the great epic that's there.)
 Now in SOUTHEY we feel too like travellers belated,
 Or men reading Hebrew not quite half translated ;
 And who reads " Kehama " or " Madoc," devotes
 Less time to the verse than he does to the notes ;
 So we quickly put up his big books on the shelf,
 For his learning to keep all its dust to itself.

Now, as to the poet—the poet ! O—bah !
 For subjects he went so tremendously far,
 In space or in time all so wide away are,
 That, though he foretold all the world would Apollo him
 Or Homer him soon, scarce a reader will follow him.
 If you do dare to wade through his epics, you feel
 The value of what Carlyle preaches—the Real ;

We truly feel bound to demand his apologies
For pitching us into these frightful mythologies ;
(If he must have monsters, why not try geology's,
Or, lacking queer marvels, not rhyme up phrenology's ?)
On Domdaniel visions invited to sup,
You try, but you can't get your appetite up,
And leave his magicians, so Indian and hellish,
And heroines, dusky and dull, with a relish,
To read, for the five hundredth time, of that Flora
"The Gardener's Daughter," or Tennyson's "Dora,"
To hear with delight, if your fancies are mine,
Hot Bertram's loud courtship of proud Geraldine,
To grow Greek with Landor—weigh "Festus's" ponderings,
To follow the sainted "Evangeline's" wanderings,
Or wonder o'er Browning ; choose either, and let him
Delight you ; for SOUTHEY—why, like all, forget him ;
And yet don't forget him, but, if you love jokes,
Dig his "Vision of Judgment" up ;—'tisn't a hoax ;
(I'll give you its character just in a word,
It's meant to be savage—it's only absurd)
He wrote it and printed it, fairly to show
That the stupidest king that has happen'd below,
Do pray get well into it ere that you nod !
Was loved, for his crown and his wisdom, by God,
And that Tory heaven, in wrath against puny us,
Had taken a spite against both Wilkes and Junius ;

Then never again shall you venture to dream
That an orthodox hater may not half blaspheme ;
That a caustic declaimer to others upon sense,
Their dullness, may not pen the dullest of nonsense ;
That a man most religious may not write profanely ;
That a sensible writer may not talk insanely ;
That an earnest believer may not in his sham metres,
Make all he believes in absurd in hexameters ;
As he serves to his friends, when at home, lean or fat,
Dealing hell out to this and redemption to that ;
That a man that, in private, will not crush a fly,
In public, won't hope how a Shelley will die ;
And he who of private men will not think evil,
Won't doom with fierce raptures great souls to the devil ;
All these sad reflections his book will give rise to,
However such things you would fain shut your eyes to.
And what will explain all ? O, why, the old story ;
The man was a Christian, and yet was a Tory ;
All came of his politics ; who dared dislike 'em,
He knew that the vengeance of heaven should strike 'em.
And what is a Tory ? I hear you exclaim ;
The creature's extinct even down to its name !
What were the queer notions that so far deranged him,
That so from his own very nature estranged him ?
I'll tell you, and though you will pity him, half
I'm inclined to imagine you'll wickedly laugh ;

One having an ear for a joke, who 's not heard it, is
So certain to roar at these ancient absurdities ;
The Tory—extinct as the Ichthyosaurus,
Was the greatest of bores e'er created to bore us,
And existed, it's thought, like the great Megatherium,
Alike to devour its fellows, and weary 'em ;
Yet, unlike all these Antediluvian gigantic,
The Tory could play you the strangest of antics ;
Like Brougham's well-known elephant, you must have heard it, he
Could pick up the least or the greatest absurdity ;
But chiefly he had the strange trick, though not blind,
Of not thinking men full nine-tenths of mankind ;
And what shows his head was of notions most loose full,
He thought all were brutes that were honest and useful.
Now, what is more strange than all—can you conceive it ?
He really half got the nine-tenths to believe it,
And 'twas held a great truth that philosopher hit on,
Who found the nine-tenths were not made to be spit on,
But really were flesh, blood, and soul, like the others,
In all but their fooleries, the tenth's very brothers.
Well, as to his politics, SOUTHEY, as Tory,
Held licking kings' shoes was the height of man's glory ;
He thought, although he might not venture such things,
That vices in subjects were virtues in kings ;
His idols were Strafford and Claverhouse, and such
As the best most abhor and the worst don't like much ;

A bigot like Laud, with ear-grubbing and all,
He couldn't but think of with Stephen and Paul ;
And still with the station his reverence mounted ;
Ex officio cherubs all kings were accounted,
But if one for extra devotion he'd pick out,
Be sure it was one that his subjects would kick out ;
The first of our Charleses—of Jameses the second,
Worst tyrants, were best worth his reverence reckon'd ;
O had he been blessed with a Heliogabalus,
His tongue had been sure to be-mob and be-rabble us,
If one had but ventured a wink or a nod
To hint such a monster 's no favourite with God.
If he'd been a Roman, an Emperor by burning
The city he reign'd in, from him had been earning
Fresh titles of honour, instead of hard names,
His reverence surely had spread with the flames,
The third of our Georges had not been a hero,
And he had been laureate to arson and Nero.

Now the picture is drawn, 'tis a marvellous creature ;
What strange contradictions in every feature !
Like the famous old shield that one can't do without,
For a passage like this, though it should be worn out,
So much its two sides have been handed about,
Like that very old shield that so long we've been told,
Was, just as you look'd at it, silver or gold,

So this man, as you looked at him, writer or brother,
Politician or father, was one thing or t'other ;
And as a shot silk this or that will be showing,
According to which way your eyesight is going,
One half would your love—one your hate would reciprocate,
But this still be said, he at least was no hypocrite ;
Goodnatured or Tory, you couldn't but feel
That his friendships and politics both were most real :
So reverence his virtues ; his failings, regret them,
Or, honouring his earnestness, try to forget them.

CRABBE ? Ye Southseys and Moores ! on this shade turn your eyes,
But blessed with whose wisdom you had been more wise ;
He the poetry saw that about our way lies,
The true tragedies that our own real life supplies ;
He left all your fine foreign frenzies alone,
For feelings that have been or might be our own ;
For this his stern tales their hold on us retain,
And are read and read over again and again,
Nor e'er for our tears or our smiles ask in vain.
But perhaps rather too much he differs from those
Who deal in mere verses ; he gives us half prose ;
In raising to poems his facts he half fails,
And we ask, " Is this poetry ? " reading his tales.
They're a sort of police reports out of the " Times,"
Set in lines of ten syllables finish'd with rhymes.

All his landscapes are primary in their formation,
As geologists say, where a granite foundation
Is only half cover'd, and gives its hard frown,
Here in bare peak and ridge, nowhere quite soften'd down,
And few are the vales, if vales are to be found,
Where you look but on soft, sweet, rich pastoral ground,
And see only all that shows gladness around.
He gives us too barely the stark naked real,
Not veiling it just enough in the ideal,
So that something of coarseness and roughness we feel ;
But there's little ruggedness, mind, in his style,
Where you feel, but you don't see, a trace of the file,
Though it has a hard coldness, like ice on a lake,
From out its stern calmness that never will break ;
Yet the line must be weighty that to be weighed with his is :
Let 's hope it will want his eternal antithesis !

No—these twin stars on earth, here I will not divide
The HOWITTS, in love and in genius allied,
In death, as in life, let them shine side by side ;
For than his and than hers both, I know of few books
Into which one more often or pleasantly looks ;
I don't think in cities men could do without them,
They've such a fresh smell of the country about them ;
Having them, though town-dungeon'd, we breathe farm-house air,
And scent clover-fields till we think we are there ;

These make in our dusky rooms, Spring ever green,
And Autumn still rustling and Summer still seen.
As for Mary herself, now who can think upon her
But as one it's a pleasure to think of and honour !
Why, it's quite a delight to heap pleasant names on her.
She writes so of all men as if they were brothers,
And is never so well pleased as when praising others,
And that love of others, you 'll find on reflection,
Is the very best way to secure one's affection ;
If you 'd know how to get love, give love my direction.
Delights unto all, her sweet books are the joy
That they rate above all things, of girl and of boy ;
And depend on it, that heart is not much defiled
By the evil of earth that is loved by the child.
Then her sweet natural ballads—who can but in her see
All that most gives their charm to the “ Reliques of Percy ? ”
Contented with truth, she has dared to rely
On but showing to all what meets every eye ;
So simple their art is, you see not their art,
You feel she writes less from her head than her heart ;
And reading them over and over, you own
They are wise who, like her, trust to nature alone.

Now for William—speak truth—is he not one of such
To whom first men give hard words, then find they owe much ?
You need a bold heart if your vision is clear,
And your tongue dares to speak what you see without fear ;

If you will not be dumb about evil, be sure,
Till the world cries you're right, you'll have much to endure.
But take heart ; let fools rail at your zeal for the right ;
'Tis the nature of blind things to screech at the light ;
Preach the truth : heed them not ; let the blockheads deride ;
In the end you will find even them by your side ;
Give them time and they'll take you at last as their guide ;
They'll talk all they shriek at, in scarce twenty years ;
So honour to HOWITT and each whom one hears
Shouting bold earnest words in mankind's deafened ears,
To the good that lies onward the world's pioneers.
If praise should crown pure thoughts and right acts, allow it's
Well won by, and well may be heap'd on the HOWITTS.

Stand forth, you as great with your tongue as your pen,
You finest of talkers and dreamers 'mongst men ;
From your lips, while your eyes with lit genius glow'd,
What poems and prose which was poetry flow'd !
Where are all those sweet words—all those fancies so fair—
Where those thick-coming thoughts, fine-brained COLERIDGE, where ?
Alas ! not on paper, but vanished in air !
That 'tis so, who that knew him, alas ! can but sigh !
O had but some all-hearing Boswell been by
To give them the life of print never to die !
No—genius is not lent for such a poor fate ;
'Tis not only to make him who's blest with it great ;

Not for his own delight does the pale possess'd swell,
But high guidance for ever to mortals to tell ;
Who to dazzle for instants, the fine frenzy wins,
But mocks the God in him and fearfully sins.
How much genius wants, wanting vigour of will !
Power to plan must be link'd to power plans to fulfil ;
What do fast-streaming fancies and grand thoughts avail,
If, unacting, to fix them for ever we fail ?
How many thus, second in genius to none,
Have died men but feeling what they might have done !
So two COLERIDGES passed—father first, and then son ;
Nature holds some dark secrets we vainly explore ;
Than the dooms of such lost lives none puzzle us more ;
Where existence at once drains the two cups of fate,
Its rarest of blessings—its fellest of hate,
Where 'tis hard to tell whether it likes or loathes best,
If it most meant the being to be curst or blest.
Thank Heaven ! though COLERIDGE knew each extreme,
Still his life was not merely, like Hartley's, a dream ;
Thank Heaven ! his existence, though chequer'd and cross'd,
Yet had many a bright dream that cannot be lost ;
Had he penn'd all he dream'd, O what fancy can tell
To what heights he had soar'd, who so soar'd and so fell !
Well, well, we 've his honied " Love " and " Christabel,"
And those so few poems, all perfect, among
The much half-perfection, he prosed and he sung
Sweet as any that ever flow'd from human tongue :

Alas ! and alas ! they are but some half-score.
Poets' poems ; O that he had left volumes more !
So while we grieve o'er all of which fate bereft us,
Let us bless bounteous Heaven for all He has left us ;
Let us reverence him deeply, and blind us almost
To his stuff in my favourite journal, the Post.

I find that I 've given so accurate a notion
Of GIFFORD's no merits, by some small devotion
Of notice to him, when I 've had to relate
How he tried to write down every author that's great,
That, as all know well there is nothing to praise in him,
Nay, to lash him with poets would false fancies raise in him :
I dismiss him at once, far too scorn'd to condemn
To the pitiless loathing he heaped upon them.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH—a shade to be revered—know it
For that of a genuine reformer and poet,
One to whom more of true hearty thanks we all owe,
Than perhaps we yet think and just now we all show ;
Our judgments too much of the old proverb savour
Our grandmothers loved so—a kiss goes by favour ;
Too often false fancies the public will strike
And breed for some author now love—now dislike ;
All's right in the long run we very well know ;
The right heads for laurels at last time will show,
Though sometimes its sight is remarkably slow ;

Nay, even the greatest are victims of whim
That now makes their fame bright, and now makes it dim,
Yet more than to most this has happened to him ;
Does this prove him less then, than if, as with many,
Reverses and changes he ne'er had known any ?
How comes he a shuttlecock thus to the town ?
Now a Milton with most who the most laughed him down,
And if, as I think, some time since over-raised,
Again to be, ere he quite settle, dispraised ?
The truth is, he was not a mere poem-maker,
But also a rough and a rude poem-breaker,
A mighty Iconoclast, who with a frown
And the fierce mace of truth smote the false idols down,
And therefore his mission at first was denied,
The prophet, like all other prophets, decried,
Till his truth grew too glaring for men to deride,
And those who'd most jeer'd at him flock'd to his side ;
But some show of reason the scoffers had too,
When at first they denied that his mission was true,
With the pendulum's sweep from the old vice he flew,
Over-shooting the right, to a vice that was new,
And, e'er he took rest from his too-far vibration,
Of course couldn't win the full faith of the nation.
'Tis a fault you must pardon, this hot over-zeal
In all who a new truth most earnestly feel ;
For it comes, in their hate of the old fault, they deem
They can't go too far to the other extreme,
And so their cry 's first held a wild crazy dream ;

Then comes the revulsion, as all men discern,
That in turning from them from truth's great self they turn,
That all that they scoff at 'twere better to learn ;
Then the teacher who first was unduly deprest,
Is as unduly thrust up too high o'er the rest,
And even for his sins and his blunderings blest ;
Then again comes the sweep, but far more weakly back,
And again his due reverence even he'll lack,
Till at last he rests still with no further pulsation,
Scarcely wavering at all from his true situation,
Not all loved, not all blamed, in the thought of his nation.
Thus, believe me, could each great man-changer relate
The life of his fame, this were surely its fate ;
Why the public has thus swept to reverence from hate
For WORDSWORTH'S great self, need I clearer to state ?
You'll remember, though some kings he always was owning,
There were some he was just as much bent on dethroning ;
To those, he was loyal beyond contradiction ;
To these, was a rebel from thorough conviction ;
And he, overloud for tithes, thrones, and the halter,
From the path of a Danton through life didn't falter ;
But like a Marat, not a mercy would show
To the then reigning house of Matilda & Co.
Still speak of him justly ; of late Lamartine
Has shown Robespierre nor sordid nor mean,
And so of this foe of the strange aristocracy
Then perched on Parnassus, though dreading democracy,

Let us do Carlyle's work for this Nol of our time,
Who uncrown'd such a crowd of false monarchs of rhyme ;
Let us do him but justice, and hold him for one
Who should not be all damn'd for the good he has done,
But rather, like Nile-floods and typhoons, excused
By the good ends he gain'd, for the good means he used,
Remembering the monsters he ventured to slay
Were Chimæras, and very great bores in their day,
And that this sort of work, although he get the rod for it,
Herakles himself was of old made a god for it ;
So spare him, ye Crokers, your spite and your blame,
On Parnassus though his be a radical name,
While you praise all that's wrong in the poet and man,
Forgive him, whenever he's right, all you can ;
Though droning much dullness for bad institutions,
He penn'd the most useful of late revolutions ;
O well might the bondsmen of nonsense rejoice,
When, yoked under Hayley, they heard his clear voice,
When he led them from out of the deserts of Pratt
And Seward, though dry springs he rested them at,
Bitter stations that nobody liked very well,
Common-place "Lyric Ballads" and bare "Peter Bell."
But let us rejoice to the work he was true,
In spite of fierce scoffers and Jeffrey's "Review,"
When scorers were many and praisers were few,
And at last led them out to the fair promised land,
The abundance of which all can now understand,

Though I fear, like the out-scaped of Egypt, that less
Than we ought, we're accustom'd our Moses to bless,
The prophet by whom a twin labour was done,
Law-giver and conqueror for us, in one,
The Moses who left us true laws from on high,
The Joshua who smote nature's foes, hip and thigh,
The great one who led us from Pratt and pretence,
To truth and to nature, to beauty and sense.
He has written too much—but who cares that 'tis so ?
Keep the diamonds you find ; let the sand drop below.
With beauty if dullness you must have as well,
Why, look at the pearl and be blind to the shell ;
Not like some who will turn from an oak for a knot or two,
Who 'll find nothing bright in the sun, from its spot or two,
And a "Greek Slave" not fine if the marble's a blot or two ;
Such are Brahmins who'll die, not to breathe the live air,
When the microscope's shown animalculæ there ;
But this to my mind is a deal too fastidious,
This super-su-super distaste of the hideous,
Remember such harshness as would make the few sick,
Is reckon'd a charm in the finest of music,
That often Beethoven and Gluck think it best
To have discords to yet the more sweeten the rest ;
I hold him too nice far who cannot repose
On a Sybarite couch for a fold in a rose,
And so far from thinking there's any great harm
In the least touch of dullness, it may be a charm.

But hold, hear me further ; I wouldn't have such of it
As makes the most tolerant vow there's too much of it,
Such as makes it a drowsy road through the "Excursion,"
And to toil through the "Sonnets," a fearful exertion ;
But I must be careful ; I have a strange fear
That somehow I'm uttering heresy here :
I know that with some 'tis their critical rule
To hold him who can't like all WORDSWORTH, a fool.
Now here, for a moment, allow me to pause,
To speculate what was the principal cause,
Besides that already I've had to relate,
That kept men so long from believing him great,
That kept them from throning him straight on the height
Where he sits on Parnassus in all the earth's sight,
Now at once its instructor, its pride, and delight :
Then I venture to say you'll not go far amiss,
If you hold that fools' praise was the prime cause of this ;
You'll remember that those who the first show'd him love,
Rank'd his dullness and nonsense, his beauty above,
That those—strange to say—who bow'd down to him first,
Liked his best pretty well but fell flat to his worst,
For his wisdom and truth did not near so much care,
As for just those bare bald things that make people stare,
Which these fools went about spouting everywhere,
And, not dreaming their silliness made a vile jest of him,
Ask'd men to believe were the wisest and best of him ;

Nay, they praised so his worst, that you think that they had
Pronounced him still greater, if all had been bad,
And the worse all had been, still had been yet more glad—
A depth of insaneness most shockingly sad :
Oh had not the world had a keener perception,
Oh had it put up with their unmeant deception,
Oh had all believed him what these men declared him,
Quite sure that they praised him, how could time have spared him !
Mankind, taken in, had held him what he's not,
And by this time our WORDSWORTH had quite been forgot.
'Tis a farce worth a Molière's pen, to depict
How in all his vile rags up our poet they tricked,
And bedizened him out in his foolings, and then,
Howling hymns, set him up for the worship of men ;
Of course, all that's in him of wise and of good
They either ignored or the least understood,
Believing all that in the least could be raising
The unelect's love, must be quite 'neath their praising ;
'Tis a strange thing to see their small vanity on its
Grand tour through the "Ecclesiastical Sonnets ;"
To watch too, believe me, 's a curious diversion
Where they pause as they jog along through the "Excursion,"
How they 'll praise up a flatness, then stay to rehearse
How it's only quite beat by a something that's worse.
A pest on the asses ! 'twas these with the charm
Of their dulness, that wrought him so very much harm :

He was doomed to be damned in a couple of ways,
By the censure of fools first, and then by their praise ;
The blockheads' abuse didn't hurt him so much
As the praise and the idiot worship of such ;
The " Edinburgh's " taunts may have stuck by him long,
But he still might be right ; it was these proved him wrong ;
His fame, though with slashes a Jeffrey filled it,
He frightened it only, 'twas these that near killed it.
How could the world reckon that he was a poet,
When they heard most those poems that quite failed to show it,
When if they began half and half to conceive it,
These thrust at them things that made all disbelieve it—
Selected his nonsense for special relation,
His dull bits and snorings for rapturous quotation,
And puffed him right up to a vile reputation.
That he's a true poet, by this you can tell—
I don't know a proof that quite proves it as well—
He has really survived their praise and " Peter Bell ! "

Now, having said good, bad, and all that we can
Of WORDSWORTH the poet, let's turn to the man ;
In choosing your neighbours, if you've the rejection
Or choice of companions, to make an election
Of living but with rocks, there's this strong objection ;
As rocks never die, they're remarkably old,
And therefore by nature remarkably cold,
Which nature is catching, you needn't be told ;

In fact that it is so the old saying owns,
When it talks about men getting like stocks and stones ;
Now mountains, through getting so high up above
All the rest of the earth, get too high up to love,
And become, like their rocks, just as dull as a stone,
Through feeling so high and through living alone.
Now, if any credit what we all have heard's worth,
Through living at Rydal, this happened to WORDSWORTH ;
He grew cold and stony in heart and in mind,
Wrapped in mists that obscured all the rest of mankind,
And to all but his own works and genius blind ;
I only explain how I think that he got so,
And say what his friends say ; I hope it was not so ;
But his life for each man his true character earns ;
His acts and his words often take different turns,
Though a cold lack of sympathy Hazlitt discerns
In his want of a Charles Lamb's deep pity for Burns.
Well, we all well may shudder to look in the glass
Where, before us, our vices and failings must pass ;
We're mortal and erring, and few, few can swell
With the Pharisee's pride, while his failings they tell
Who sleeps 'mid the mountains he wrote of so well.

O sweet-natured MITFORD ! what laurelled shade shows
Higher claims to our love and our praises than those,
We love so to own at once, witch'd by your prose !

Yon rhymers of bulbuls—look—what charms can be,
In our plain English life, for the eye that can see !
Place that in a green country village at home,
And for subjects be sure it feels small need to roam ;
Thatched hovels for it are with tragedies rife
Or with comedies gleeful ; it sees death and life,
Joys and sorrows—existence ;—what needs it but these,
On our glad tears and laughter for ever to seize !
Sweet village ! Our village ! so treasured above
All but Auburn, that ever can be in our love,
Well the pages that paint thee two worlds may so prize !
What, across every ocean, to English-sprung eyes
Can so bid the dear life of the old country rise !
Bustling town—lonely hall—leafy lane—quiet farm—
Gorse-flushed heath—ferny park—woodlands bright with the charm
Of spring or of autumn—the haw-crimsoned thicket—
Primrosed dells—firelit parlours—loud skittles or cricket—
The red-coated hunt the bright morn sweeping through—
The greyhounds, the hare tracking down through the dew—
The keeper's hushed watch and the poacher's dark round—
The step whose quick sound makes the hearer's heart bound,
Whether that of the village belle or of the queen
Of the ball where but high county beauties are seen :
All the life of the farmhouse—the cottage—the hall
Would the dweller in cities before his thought call,
In the town, she shall raise up the green homes afar,
Through the light of her genius more fair than they are.

Oh ! as hers, where are words so endeared to our ears,
So met by our glad laughs—so wet with our tears !
Sweetest smile—warmest heart—rarest pen—finest brain—
What years for one like you shall long all in vain !
How many must pass ere your like write again !

Hail ! SHELLEY ! you whom the hard world, sin-defiled,
Was no place for ; who through all its raging and wild
Imprecations, trod on with the heart of a child !
For, as somewhere Gilfillan most finely has said,
An eternal child you were, by innocence led
To question all falseness with no thought of dread ;
Men, fed on abuses, as foul as might be,
That you with your clear fearless sight could but see,
Unguiding, unsparing the doubts of your youth,
With base, brutal violence, in you trod down truth.
A christian, most christian in love, need I tell
What you, on this earth most unchristian, befel,
How Oxford, most Oxford-like, joyed to expel
Your genius, and doom you forthwith unto hell !
Then, down-trod by bloated cant, how you dared turn,
And, thanks to them, almost the dread name dared earn,
That they shrieked, their excuse your pure spirit to spurn,
Few, knowing your wrongs, are astonished to learn ;
White nature ! such pureness made martyrdom sure,
An eternal accusal of all so less pure ;

The small feel insulted when any are great ;
The spite of the vilest is still virtue's fate,
The more nigh to perfection, the fiercer's the hate,
Though with slander not hemlock, we now our rage sate.
This was truth's most true follower, and dared to obey
All his thought dreamed it e'er heard her holy lips say ;
So he swept, in her name, all foul things from his path,
With a love for all right that to all wrong grew wrath,
That drove him strange frenzy and wild words to deal
On deceits, with a fierceness 'twas strange he could feel :
Yet not strange : for those lips most accustomed to bless,
Grow whitest in wrath from their strong love's excess,
For their passion for right makes their passion more strong
Than in those who love right less, 'gainst all that is wrong.
You call him an infidel ; what's that, if true ?
One who doesn't believe to a hairsbreadth with you.
Why on him was that name so especially chalked ?
Ah, friends, he but lived the religion you talked.
Cant, believe me, 's a shrew ; don't you hope to deceive her ;
The better one's acts, he's the worse unbeliever ;
So had SHELLEY talked but cant and acted but evil,
Be sure, they'd have held him a saint, not a devil.
Oh ! had kind fate managed in him but to dish up
All the vices that go to make up one good bishop,
Given him a head but fit for fluxions and Greek,
But a tongue all the truths of a pure faith to speak,

But a life that in practice that faith quite denied,
Deeds, that told that the lips that preached they were sins, lied,
Meek humility, grand in a carriage and four,
Hate of pomps, throned in palaces and wanting more,
Holy rage against thieves,—a most hot indignation
'Gainst all robbers, except all his fellows in station,
And himself—his pure self, so defrauding the nation,—
With a titled saint's thirst for the weal of the church,—
With base acts, fast leading her into the lurch,
Who then in his faith could have found aught amiss ?
Had he not been perfect, if he had been this ?
Oh ! had his belief but compelled him to jostle
In words with all vice, he had been an Apostle :
And had he, a still better churchman, defended
Every living abuse, had his praise ever ended !
How could he such heavenly living have mended !
Could Paul, come again, then his fame have transcended !
But no, he is damned, for he liked well democracy,
And fiercely denounced both the Church and hypocrisy.
When will men rank years of words, less than one act !
And hold worth just nothing, all that is not fact !
When will Christians see that the red fire of Hell is
For those who mock Christ with lies, and not for SHELLEYS !
Oh ! lost ere his fulness of greatness begun,
Of our singers, Mozart and Beethoven in one,
Had he lived—what a fame did the Fates in him cross !
Who had then told his glory ! who now may our loss !

Had they lived—he and Keats—how that thought haunts their names !

Alike in their young deaths—alike in their fames !

Who shall say to what stature their greatness had grown,

Whom as half great as Gods, in their fair youth we own !

Had they not been both less than our greatest alone !

Living, doubt it not ! SHELLEY had soon lived to feel

How, for truth hot, at truth he had railed in blind zeal ;

Oh ! surely his hate had to reverence turned

For that purest of faiths that he'd not yet discerned,

For its teachers' abuses, by none should be spurned !

Oh ! doubt not that soon he had ceased to confound it

With the vices and lies with which preachers surround it,

And, to its white purity blinded no more,

By its human defilements, had burned to adore

All the evil of men made him rave at before !

Hush your soul to his sweetness ; what airs steal along

Through your sense, strung to aching, to drink in his song !

Listen ! Fletcher's or Beaumont's or Shakespeare's own spells

Bewitch you ; fair Milton's young verse rolls and swells

Around you ; such sweetness your senses 'tis bringing,

You dream you hear Coleridge or Tennyson singing,

And caught, like his skylark, from height to glad height,

Of the earth and its labours and cares losing sight,

Mount, raptured, from heaven to heaven of delight ;

Yet it needs a half SHELLEY to read him aright ;

Of all souls that his thoughts to their high presence win,
How few but, ere they've read one page, must begin
To re-read him to take all his full beauty in,
Toiling up to the heights where his dreams sing and soar,
With a labour they little have needed before :
Here they feel, is one fit to his pure feet to draw
Purest minds, to his teachings to listen in awe,
To be led in hushed reverence, from dream to dim dream,
Such as tranced human ears in thy groves, Academe,
Such as yet through the brains of rapt Emersons float,
Such as Socrates talked, and, thank Heaven ! Plato wrote ;
Yet, as in Turner's paintings, wherever you turn
You can nothing but wavering splendours discern,
(The mistier, the more Ruskin's praises they earn)
So he whose devotion to Shelley's most warm,
Must wish his fine works were more perfect in form ;
They're like Chaos ere yet it had quite given birth
To the green circling globe—the fair round glorious earth,
Where all mixed forms of beauty towards one whole are whirled
Ere yet, sprung to order, they circle—a world ;
Oh ! had the grand images, so wildly thrown
From his brain, each a splendour and marvel alone,
To the grandeur of perfect and ordered art grown,
Each linking a glory from each to its own,
In his beauty had yet higher beauty been seen ;
Even great as he is, how yet greater he'd been !

Uncontrolled, his fine fancies leapt forth as they would,
Yet, half grasping the power of creation, he stood,
All that scorned his young ruling, just half ruling o'er,
In the "Cenci" their master—their weak slave no more ;
Oh ! for what mighty labours that young might stood girt—he
Who heaped on man such gifts ere yet he was thirty !

Thou of Satan ! an essay MACAULAY hath writ
With such truth and profundity, genius and wit,
On what thou'rt, I refer thee and all men to it ;
There, each one will see, to get farthest from Homer, he
Has but to read, if he can, Robert Montgomery.

Flesh and shadow on Earth, here, all shadow, stand forth
Thou rare, fine, wrong genius, dear CHRISTOPHER NORTH !
How the gleams and the mists upon moor, vale and hill,
As I see thee before me, the lit darkness fill !
O best of enchanters ! in lane and close room,
To the wearied of work and the dark city's gloom,
With thy magic-blest pen who so often has brought
Heathy solitudes where but the wild deer are sought,
The scenes of a Landseer transmuted to thought ;
Hast given them to see in thy sorcerer's glass,
Black bothy—still shieling—the pine-darkened pass—
The white, plunging cataract—the wild, foaming stream—
Brown pools, where the trout and the grey salmon gleam—

The angler's still watch and the line's silent throw,
The river's steep bank or the lake's cliff below—
The deerstalker's crouch, with his hounds held behind
Strewn rocks, while the tall stags come, scenting the wind—
The hunter's return, with his antler-slung horse,
In the thronged ferry-boat, the clear loch pulled across ;
Take our blessings for such and a thousand such sights ;
Take our blessings for blessing our ears with delights ;
Through their town-deafened sense, as though heard in a dream,
Would such visions were sometimes as real as they seem !
Is the moor-cock's shrill crow and the wild swan's lone scream,
The bell of the herd—clash of horn on fierce horn—
The roar of the fall, on the mountain breeze borne—
The splash, through the hush, that the crag's echo calls,
As the salmon springs up at the steep foam and falls—
O thrice-blessed pen ! that in cities, surrounds
Our life with far nature's wild grandeurs and sounds !

As a poet, although we still talk of his fame,
Of each work that obtained it, we know but the name ;
The " Plague City's " scenes move no longer our qualms ;
And who now ever finds out his far " Isle of Palms ! "
They have passed from our tongues ; on our shelves they're instead ;
They're bought, bound and labelled ; but when are they read !
There's a fragment still floats of them though, in a slip
That's found still in extracts, about some doomed ship ;

But what if above them, oblivion close !
He's sure of eternal renown in his prose ;
Who'd care to what 'tis, such a fame that one owes,
While on such living laurels he'll ever repose !

Now who of old Christopher can fail to mourn ?
As chief blunderer of Maga, he must have our scorn,
That he whose fine nature gives such high delight,
Should have dealt out so freely abuse of the right,
And abuse polished sharp and envenomed with spite,
That he should be howler of cock and bull stories,
That no one could read but the Toriest of Tories—
That every move on should be barred by his malison !
His stupidity's mantle he 's left unto Alison,
Now its dull leaden weight, he no longer can bear it ;
I wonder he found an Elisha to wear it !
Well, England's not ruined, as he said so much,
And Reform has survived the blind blows of his crutch,
As new reforms will, the still wild rage of such ;
Sic transit—alas ! 'tis the oldest of stories,
How fleeting wrong rules are, and all the worst glories ;
We've Cobdens and sense now, for nonsense and Tories ;
Now will Christopher, somewhat cooled down by his age,
Read with some little calmness the following page,
Where I've put a few truths which are truths I engage ;
Let him set down his crutch, while he bears this digression,
Which contains an apology and a confession ;

Ah ! I daresay he'll take both a somewhat amiss,
But the rude force of facts has compelled me to this,
That, to speak the plain truth out, my doubtings are strong
Of a wisdom that always is leading men wrong,
And I can't help my reverence strangely forgetting
For philosophies every year is upsetting ;
If facts and their theories will not agree,
And all they think proper, God will not let be,
Why facts and not dreams are the true things for me ;
I'll give Heaven, in spite of whatever they say,
The credit of ruling the very best way,
Nor prose through whole volumes with Kit and the rest,
That theirs and not Heaven's own system is best,
Forgetting that all that their set so affrights
Is God himself setting disorder to rights,
And that history shows us that all that's been howled a
By wiseacres like them, howe'er it 's been scowled at,
Has always best proved that the Gods understood
Much more than their wisdoms, what's most for man's good,
And has taught such as I, to have faith, though we find
The ordering of Heaven not quite to our mind,
And that, if our systems don't square with what is,
With our systems themselves there is something amiss ;
Yet all have their uses, even Maga and Co. ;
The drag is of use that won't let the coach go
Too fast for its safety down hill, and one feels
That these are the drags on Society's wheels ;

So pity still these for the part that they play,
So long as they honestly think what they say,
Although they seem sadly at times in the way ;
They pull against Providence plainly—that's flat ;
But Providence wills it—so never mind that ;
The world will roll on, let them pull as they will,
Though they do their small utmost to make it stand still ;
It moves and it moves, as the Tuscan sage saw,
And as they will not see, for its motion's a law,
And for ever will move, though they shriek and they rage,
To what the Gods will it—its true golden age,
An age of the brotherly strivings of peace,
Where evil shall dwindle, and good shall increase.

Well, now for burnt cork and scowls murderous as iron,
Behold the great grown-up child Harold, LORD BYRON,
Just two things in one—we're beginning to know it,
A very great coxcomb and yet a great poet.
Let's venture a question ; how much of his fame
Came to him, like Newstead, because of his name ?
How much had his cut-throats and thieves been adored
By misses and men, had he not been a Lord ?
Oh had he been born—'tis a strange speculation,
And yet not without a concern for the nation—
Oh had he been born in a hovel or street
Where men with real struggles and miseries meet,

Had his genius not been, like a Wordsworth's, jeered down,
Like Keats's, the Quarterly's jest for the town ;
More railed at—more blessed, had at once been his state ;
He had been less befumed, but oh ! surely more great,
Sorrow-softened, had known more and less abused than
The things that he swore at and asked for praise, men ;
Some wisdom, some horn on the hands of us, earns ;
Soft palms make a BYRON but hard ones a Burns ;
But judge not the hardness of hand has a part,
Or the softness of palm, with the make of the heart ;
Remember, the one from the plough turned away,
O'er the nest it upthrew, a true poem to say,
Words immortal in pity—immortal in tears,
For which mercy herself no forgetfulness fears ;
Then think that the other, with nature as fine,
But over his own fancied hardships could whine—
How hatred and oaths at all mankind he hurled,
Deeply grieved to be not the one thought of the world :
Disgusted with men's love of aught else and self—
Of all things that drew off their eyes from himself ;
Abandoned, who talked his race deaf—himself dumb,
To tell those, so longed for, he'd not have them come ;
Oh had he been needy and thus been exempt
From what once won him fame and now wins him contempt !
Poor and low—never mind ! void of hatred and pride,
How much greater he'd lived—how much greater had died !

Had not raved—had not written so much, men in vain,
In spite of its genius, would not read again—
Had not been so censured for years and abhorred
For ages—men's worship although not a Lord—
Of less scowls and less sneers he, be sure, had made use,
And had dealt more in blessing and less in abuse—
Had felt how much gentleness towers above
All scorn—how all wisdom is summed up in love—
How blest is forgiveness, and malice how poor—
How much meaner it is to inflict than endure—
And that man, like to God, should no difference know
In the station of sighs or the rank of a woe,
Except to the deepest, most pity to show,
With Sterne's dear old uncle, had not thought it evil
To pity—nay, even to hope for the Devil ;
Then had all his genius lived on our lips,
And his sun never known e'en a partial eclipse ;
Then a light—not a beacon—to darken—no—never,
He had lighted on man through the ages for ever.

Now what's his one character, made all of scoff,
That once frowned our love on—that now frowns it off,
Frowned, not only of school-girls the terror and joy,
But the awe of the man, as 'tis now of the boy ;
So smiting the knave-stricken fancies of all,
Making vices so fine and mere virtues so small,
That you wonder that men could be honest at all—

That, finding his scamps so sublime, the whole nation
Didn't rob and cut throats out of sheer admiration ;
Had they done so, what had Serjeant B. and Judge A.,
His equal admirers with them, dared to say ?
What could they have said, but held with him, ere long,
That laws and the whole ten commandments were wrong,
But have gravely declared, with a pleasing variety,
That rogues and far worse were the saints of society ;
That all times had been about virtues mistaken
And ought to have grown large, all vice they'd forsaken,
And God—though indeed that it must be confest
He and Byron differed, still Byron knew best,
And that all sure henceforth far the highest should praise a man
For all now most sure to the gallows to raise a man :
We try hard to doubt it, but can't at all doubt
Through the land that this sad foolish plague went about ;
We dare not to doubt it, though each one would rather
He'd not have to blush for a Byron-struck father,
And had, far more than have Norman blood in each vein,
Be one's son who dared all this trash to disdain,
But so Heaven willed it ; thank Heaven ! it's all past ;
The pestilence was far too fearful to last,
Yet still all men's senses this cloud did o'ercast,
Till men, not held asses, in tens out of twelves,
Turned down their shirt-collars and loved but themselves ;
'Twas a fearful irruption, that history ranks
With the burst upon Rome of the Vandals and Franks ;

Yet all man's pure manias it throws in the shade,
Witch-finding—Pre-Raphaelites—the Mormon Crusade,
Any faith in the speeches by Disraeli made,
Or belief by a man with the cataract off his eyes,
In Croker's reviews or in Alison's prophecies.
To sketch this impostor, of which one so talks,
Needs a Salvator's hand and the darkest of chalks,
Or his pen that be-heroed Jack Sheppard and Faux ;
This thing of huge stride and theatrical grin,
Compounded of like parts of fustian and sin,
Of very white hands, when they're washed free from gore,
Who's done heaps of murder, and means to do more,
Whose countenance, swarthy, and hairy, and haggard,
Smacks of, which you don't know most, swellmobsman or black-
guard,
This Jew in his ornaments, which you must feel,
As he stole 'em, and damned himself for 'em, are real,
With a very slouched hat, which you very well see
Is to shade him from being hanged, as he should be,
With a scimeter, wet from some murderous attacks,
And a dagger for sticking in honest men's backs,
To prepare them for swimming, tied safe up in sacks,
As happened to some one who couldn't but see
Count Lara was just what he oughtn't to be,
And, in Irish fashion, as practised at Tara,
Was therefore next night put an end to by Lara.

Now this is his hero, not sketched much amiss ;
His one single scoundrel—what is it but this ?
Who can say that 'tis not so ? the matter don't mince,
The cap fits them all, whether pirate or prince ;
“Giaour,” “Corsair,” “Alp,” “Manfred,” “Childe Harold ”—you've
done

The vile looks of all in the vile looks of one ;
Out of all of the mantles the wearers disgrace,
You see staring at you the same bravo face ;
And what are your thoughts when before you, you see
Its would-be-great grandeur ? what can they but be ?
Let girls in their presence feel fearful to wink,
But even their scowlings compel men to think
How at the Adelphi—that terrible theatre !—
Celeste scowls at O. Smith, and, horrible ! he at her.
And again to speak out a truth, plain if not pleasant,
They're such a long way off—these lands of the crescent,
And each seems of miscreants such a vile den,
We're better in England with honester men ;
So you shrug up your shoulders, and waste not a word,
Save to wonder such genius could be so absurd.
Yet, reading him, say not his genius is small ;
If half of him's nonsense, yet half is not all ;
Look again at his “Corsairs ;” you cannot but feel
That all you most laugh at, is based on the real ;
To know them, you cannot but say is your pains worth ;
They're not the fierce foolish dressed dolls of an Ainsworth ;

Abhor, as you must, their low *penchant* for crime,
Abhorring, you feel that they live all the time ;
Keep them out of your boys' hands and girls' heads, and then
Put them into their way when they're women and men ;
While you reason, and therefore decry him, admire
In his language, his point, and his force, and his fire ;
Lament their direction, but own that you meet
In his passions, the glare of the whitest of heat ;
That in parts of his "Harold," and parts of his "Tales,"
He is fine—that in all, you can scarce say he fails ;
That, if you see not his fine genius in all,
If he is not great always, he never is small ;
That though his philosophy mostly is stuff,
And you feel that its handling ought to be rough,
Yet his words and his lines you quote often enough ;
That few things you'd sooner put in your portmanteau,
When travelling, than "Childe Harold's" finest, fourth canto ;
That his "Manfred" is noble, in spite of its theme ;
That you often and often read over his "Dream ;"
That his "Juan" has things in it, than which you'll see
Few greater in any, from Chaucer to me,
The deepest of passions, love, terror, and woe,
Whose words, burning blood seethes and surges below ;
Though you loathe its atrocious appeals to the senses,
And his cold sneers at virtues, which he held pretences,
(Which shows that, like Sheridan, he had been glad
To think what he had not, that no one else had,)

Still read the last letter of Julia, and own
That the sorrow that's there has the tenderest tone ;
Then turn to the shipwreck, and ask yourself where
You will find finer painting, or truer despair ?
All the story of Haidee, if you can read through
Nor feel him a poet, like you there are few ;
If you hunger for beauty, go, see how they dream,
In what Monckton Milnes has, I think, called the Hareem,
But laugh at him, scorn him—nay, loathe if you will,
Despite all, yet feel he's the true poet still ;
And, spite his philosophy, hail him for one
Of the great, if not greatest, who new glories won—
New glories that high through the future shall stand
For the name that he bore—for his language and land.

Again of a great shade with reverence I speak,
In thought and in language as great as a Greek,
Londor, Attic in grace and in power, who knows
The grandeur of calmness—the strength of repose ;
His are thoughts whose high worth only small critics doubt,
Thoughts we read but to reverence, not wrangle about ;
His is prose that the wisest still read more and more ;
His are poems that poets the oftenmost turn o'er,
Poems that we hold great having once set our eye on,
Like Wordsworth's fine Laodamia and Dion
The Laureate's CEnone, and Horne's grand Orion ;

Yet a more perfect interest his speakers would win them,
If, less statue-like, they had less marble in them.

Here Hebe's white shoulder just peeps in the door,
With "Thunderer, dinner is smoking ; its four ;
And mistress is saying you're always so late ;
You know what her bursts are ; O don't make her wait !"
"Wait ! wait ! I should think not ! I would not provoke
Her tongue to a tempest ; her storms are no joke ;
Quick, Mnemy, to dinner ; you've read all the best ;
Some other time, sweetest, will do for the rest ;
How he's ruffled the plumes of these eagles of song !
They'll think him too rough, but I don't think he's wrong ;
Hark ! Heré's tongue going—quick—do come along !"
Here the Goddess and Zeus disappear through the door,
And of Minos's Verdicts when shall we hear more ?

THE END.

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